

City of Lakesite
Policy Regarding City Responsibility
Culvert Maintenance

Culverts perform two functions. They provide drainage for ditch water as well as homeowner access to their residence. They lie on city right of way but exist for the convenience of homeowners. From the city's point of view, culverts are part of a system intended to minimize water damage to public roadways. When culverts become clogged with leaves, gravel, and other debris, their effectiveness at performing this essential function is diminished or even nullified. Therefore, it is in the public's interest to maintain culverts in good condition so that the flow of water through them is unimpeded.

Occasionally, homeowners contribute to the obstruction of culverts by allowing litter and yard debris to wash into ditches fronting their property, and from there into the culverts underlying their driveways. Likewise, disturbing soil along or near ditch lines can cause gravel and dirt to accumulate in the culverts. Such blockages cause water to back up in the ditch and may eventually lead to overflows, which create traffic safety hazards and cause damage to roadways. Taxpayers are then saddled with the expense of fixing the problem, an expense that, in most cases, is avoidable since the simple expedient of keeping the culvert free of blockages also represents costs to taxpayers since limited city resources must be consumed in such a maintenance program, resources that are then unavailable for other city services.

Therefore, it is the policy of the City of Lakesite to require homeowners to assume responsibility for the maintenance of culverts that allow access to their properties. In the event that a culvert becomes clogged, creating a threat to traffic safety and/or potential damage to public roads, a city representative will assess the situation and determine to the best of his or her ability the reason(s) for the blockage. If it is determined that homeowner negligence or actions caused the problem, the homeowner will be instructed to clear the culvert within a specified time. The time allowed will depend on the severity of the threat. If the homeowner does not clear the culvert in the allotted amount of time, the city will clear the culvert and bill the homeowner for the service. Billing will be based on the amount of time, the cost of equipment, and the cost of supplies required to clear the culvert. Failure to pay the bill within 30 days will lead to imposition of late charges, compounded each 30 day period the bill remains unpaid. After 90 days, unpaid bills will be turned over to the city attorney for collection.

Adopted October 21, 2003 at a regularly scheduled Lakesite City Commission Meeting:

Commissioner Burkett asked that the policy on city responsibility for culvert maintenance be considered Mayor Mullin made a motion to accept the policy, Commissioner Wilkerson seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye and motion carried.